



FACULTY OF ARTS
Charles University

Department of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures

Opponent's Report

Pavλίna Míková, "Gender and Loneliness in Contemporary Irish Short Stories" (BA Thesis)

Pavλίna Míková's Bachelor's thesis is an ambitious projects that attempts to outline the nature of contemporary Irish short story writing on the backdrop of the significant social change that has occurred in Ireland over the last three decades or so. Overall, it is a fine essay marked by fluency of writing (despite the occasional glitches in the use of language), lucidity of argument and judicious use of up-to-date criticism. Indeed, the scope of the project well exceeds the expectations of a BA thesis.

It is the scope of the project and the limitations of available space that result in some problems, however, most of which pertain to the structure of the work. For instance, the outline of the transformations of Irish society associated with the Celtic Tiger era provided on pp. 3-4 is rather hazy and after a mere few paragraphs gives way to the discussion of the family as a theme in contemporary short stories. While this is hardly an issue to be addressed at the defence, there are a few that do deserve further discussion and/or clarification:

1. How does the candidate approach the gender of her selected authors? The chapter on "the new Irish woman" and the "female quest" discusses works by a female and a male writer, while the following chapter dedicated to "the male take on emotional numbness" discusses works by men only. Related to that, can the candidate elucidate her criteria for the selection of the stories for discussion, given that there are dozens that may potentially be eligible, and the publication date does not seem to play a role (as one of the selected stories was published in 1991, but most others much later)?
2. How radical is the break from earlier Irish fiction in terms of depicting taboo themes, and how big a role did the collapse of the Celtic Tiger play in it, in the candidate's view? The same question applies to the critique of patriarchy by women writers, as the present thesis seems to imply that this occurs first in the era of the recent turbulent changes in Irish society.

I recommend the thesis for defence and propose to grade it as "excellent" or "very good", based on the result of the defence.

Prague, 31 May 2019

Prof. Ondřej Pilný, PhD